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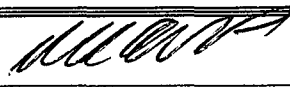
**TITLE:** The 1967 Six Day War Fundamentally Changed the Political Landscape of the Arab-Israeli Conflict


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
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### *Preface*

The impetus for this research project was an attempt to glean a better understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict, particularly from the context of how the June 1967 Six Day War shaped the political environment of that region of the Middle East. In the process I found that the scope of the conflict is vast and complex. The Six Day War as an event that shaped the Middle East is a well researched and discussed topic with numerous opinions. Most agree that the Six Day War had a significant impact on the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. The fact that peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians center on the disposition of the occupied territories I felt warranted a further examination into how the Six Day War brought this situation into existence.

I would like to acknowledge the patience of my wife Joanna and my son Jackson, who put up with my long hours of seclusion and the late nights. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance received from the superb staff at Grays Research Center who helped me track down a good many sources and provided editorial assistance. I would also be remiss if I did not thank the assistance, mentorship, and guidance received from Dr. Douglas E. Streusand, whom was invaluable in helping me wrap my brain around this complex problem and showed an extraordinary amount of patience as I tried to understand such an important event in the Middle East.

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## Executive Summary

**Title:** The 1967 Six Day War Fundamentally Changed the Political Landscape of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

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**Thesis:** The 1967 Arab-Israeli Six Day War was a watershed moment that re-shaped the nature of the Palestinian-Arab-Israeli conflict.

**Discussion:** The lands of Palestine have been historically contested lands because of their religious and in some cases strategic significance. Palestine has passed through many hands over the centuries, the most recent occupants – the Israelis have been the most divisive. The Zionist movement that gave birth to the lands of Israel set the Arabs against the Israelis in what has become the Arab-Israeli conflict. We can see the results of this conflict today in the news, be it historic peace negotiations at Camp David or the violence associated with the occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. When looking at the genesis of this conflict, it is easy to recognize the historical roots of the conflict over such religiously significant real estate. Nonetheless, despite the millennia old dispute over the holy lands. There has been one event that established a new framework for the conflict we now see taking place in Israel and the occupied territories. This event was the 1967 Arab-Israeli Six Day War. The Six Day War was a watershed moment in the course of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the political impacts of this event fundamentally altered the political landscape for the Israelis, Palestinians, Arab states, the United States, and Soviet Union.

**Conclusion:** The 1967 Six Day War undoubtedly altered the political landscape of the Arab-Israeli War. On a micro level it had a lasting effect on the politics of the Israelis and the Palestinians. On a macro level, it altered the regional politics and diplomacy regarding Israel; and set the stage for the long term involvement of the United States in the conflict and the loss of influence of the Soviet Union in the region.

## INTRODUCTION

The headline reads, “Unilateral Withdrawal: A New Phase in Israel’s Approach to the Palestinian Question,”<sup>1</sup> or the article reads, “Israelis plan to build wall against terrorism.”<sup>2</sup> These are but a small sample of the contemporary state of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has existed for more than six decades. The conflict is complex. The scope of the conflict spans far beyond Israel, Palestine, and the Middle East. Primarily referred to as the Arab-Israeli conflict; it has also been called the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is interesting to note how the descriptive title of the conflict so easily vacillates between the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Both are accurate descriptions. What has been lost in the news bulletins on the conflict is the recognition that there are two dimensions driving the conflict. The first is the interstate conflict between Israel and the Arab states. Second and most importantly, there is the inter-communal conflict taking place in Israel and the occupied territories between the Israelis and the Palestinians.<sup>3</sup> The factors that have gone into forming this complex conflict have their basis on a set of events that are dots on a timeline. Looking at the timeline, it is evident that there have been “trigger” events that have had strategic implications. The 1967 Arab-Israeli Six Day War is one such moment. The Six Day War was a watershed moment that altered the course of the Arab-Israeli conflict by changing the political environment for the Israelis, the Palestinians, the Arab countries of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, and the Cold War superpowers. To grasp how the Six Day War had such a significant impact on the conflict and the politics on a micro and macro level, it is first necessary to understand the history that gave birth to the conflict.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### The Significance of Palestine

To understand how the Six Day War altered the political landscape of the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is first necessary to examine the historical roots. The history of the conflict between the Israelis and Arabs in Palestine is much older than recent events would indicate. The Dome of the Rock, established by the Umayyad caliph in 691 serve to make Jerusalem one of the most sacred cities in Islam – surpassed only by Mecca and Medina.<sup>4</sup> This makes Jerusalem one of the most prized pieces of real estate for Israelis, Christians, and Muslims. Even as Zionist settlement was taking place in Palestine, business, trade and employment relations remained relatively neighborly. The emergence of opposition to Zionism prior to World War I was in part a response to Zionist immigration and land purchases.<sup>5</sup> There was an underlying concern that the Zionist would move in, take control, and there would be no room for the Palestinians. The Arab fears became reality as the Zionist movement gained momentum in Europe and the United States.<sup>6</sup> The fall of the Ottoman Empire following World War I would change the status quo. The 1917 Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate over Palestine would serve to set the conditions for a new era of conflict over Palestine by giving Zionist a reason to believe that *Eretz Israel* could become reality through the British.<sup>7</sup>

### Communal Wars and the British Mandate

In the latter part of World War I, the British defeated the Ottoman army in Jerusalem, which resulted in British control of Palestine in 1917. During November of that same year,



Arthur Balfour drafted the fateful Balfour Declaration and despite the controversy surrounding the document, reinforced the idea of a Zionist homeland in Palestine.<sup>8</sup> The Palestinian Arabs also had national aspirations and for the first time in many centuries, it looked possible. Instead, what the Arab Palestinians received was the loss of status as Muslims in the Ottoman Empire and the world powers focusing on the establishment of a “Jewish National Home.”<sup>9</sup> The Balfour Declaration and an inability to stop Jewish immigration created increasing tensions between Palestinians and Israelis. During the 1920s and 30s, Palestine was rocked by a series of violent acts, including anti-Jewish riots, The Wailing Wall incidents of 1929, and the 1937 Arab Rebellion.<sup>10</sup> These disturbances spawned a British inquiry to look into the Palestine “problem.” In the lead up to World War II, it would become painfully evident to the British that they needed to resolve this situation so that they could turn their attention to the war in Europe.<sup>11</sup>

Following World War II, Great Britain was feeling economic and political pressures over its imperial holdings. The growing conflict between Arabs, Zionists, and the British Administration pressured the British into terminating its mandate over Palestine on May 15, 1948.<sup>12</sup> During the same period, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) determined that the British Mandate should end with the establishment of two states in Palestine – one Palestinian, the other Zionist.<sup>13</sup> For the Arabs, a Zionist state in Palestine was an anathema. Israelis, who had seen the Arab response to Zionism through violent confrontation under the *Mufti*<sup>14</sup>, also recognized the powder keg the UNSCOP had lit. This raised the stakes for Arab and Zionist leaders, who became increasingly convinced that Palestine would be resolved by armed conflict.<sup>15</sup> The level of violence in the communal war increased significantly as the British prepared for their withdrawal from Palestine and the Palestinians and Israelis struggled

for supremacy<sup>16</sup>. On May 14, 1948, the British ended its mandate in Palestine, the Arabs would move to establish control of Palestine and initiate the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.<sup>17</sup>

### **The First Arab-Israeli War of 1948**

The Arab-Israeli War of 1947-48 firmly established the independent Jewish state.<sup>18</sup> For the Arabs, the war was an abysmal failure and was given the name the Palestinian Catastrophe. The Israelis not only succeeded in creating their own independent state, they acquired more land than defined by the UN partition plan. The western bank of the Jordan River, including Jerusalem came under the control of Transjordan. Additionally, large segments of the Palestinian population became refugees in Jordan and the Gaza Strip. Given this outcome, it is of little surprise that tension between the Israelis and Arabs remained high and set the condition for the 1956 Suez-Tripartite War.

### **The Suez-Tripartite War of 1956**

Despite Israel's victory in 1948, the violence in Palestine continued. Exacerbating the situation were the Lavon Affair<sup>19</sup>, the *fedayeen* raids into Israel from the Egypt controlled Gaza strip, the heavy-handed retaliatory tactics used by the Israelis against the Palestinians, and the political brinksmanship by Egyptian President Abdul Nasser.<sup>20</sup> The nationalization of the Suez Canal by Nasser in late July of 1956 was the spark that ignited the Israeli, French, and British invasion of Egypt.<sup>21</sup> Galvanized by the military agreements between Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia and reassured by support from France and Great Britain via the Tripartite Agreement.

Israeli forces invaded Egypt's territory on 30 October 1956.<sup>22</sup> Although the closure of the Suez Canal was the catalyst for the conflict, Israel's objectives centered on removing Nasser from power, the destruction of the Egyptian army, reopening the Suez Canals and the Straits of Tiran, and to force Arab leaders back to the negotiation tables over the status of Israel in Palestine.<sup>23</sup> Overall, 1956 Suez War did little to change the status quo as both sides claimed victory in the outcome. Israel did not achieve all of its objectives, but it did accomplish the goal of reopening the Straits of Tiran and the Suez Canal with minimal casualties. For the Arabs, President Nasser was able to use the Israeli-French-British attack to show how the Western imperial powers sought to control the Arab world. This strengthened Nasser's cause of Arab Nationalism and sparked the creation of the United Arab Republic in 1958.<sup>24</sup> The festering problem of the Zionist state in Palestine continued to give Arabs cause for violent action against the Israelis.

### **The Six Day War**

National survival was the basis for Israel's preemptive attack that initiated the Six Day War.<sup>25</sup> A number of regional factors shaped the decision for Israel to start the Six Day War. The continued border clashes with Syria, disputes with Jordan over water rights, and the close proximity of Israeli cities to Arab artillery, put the Israeli leadership under immense pressure to act before the Arabs could consolidate their military might and "drive the Israelis into the sea."<sup>26</sup> On 21 May, history would repeat itself; Nasser once again shut down the Straits of Tiran and prevented Israel bound ships from entering the Gulf of Aquaba.<sup>27</sup> In the Egyptian Sinai, Nasser took the provocative steps of not only sending troops and armor to the Israeli border with Sinai, he also demanded the withdrawal of the United Nation's Emergency Force (UNEF) managing

the cease fire along the Egyptian-Israeli border.<sup>28</sup> The troop movements by Egypt, along with mutual defense pacts between Egypt and Syria, and Egypt and Jordan prompted Israel to call up its own reserve troops and position forces along the border with Egypt.<sup>29</sup> On June 5, 1967, Israel started the Six Day War by initiating air strikes against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. Israel succeeded in every facet of the war, from the initial air strikes, to the campaigns in the Sinai, the West Bank, and Syria to a degree that surprised even the Israelis.<sup>30</sup> By June 10, Israel occupied three times the land it had occupied before June 5. Israel would also be responsible for more than one million additional Arab Palestinians, controlled the holy city of Jerusalem, the strategic grounds of the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, and all of the Sinai Peninsula to the Suez Canal.<sup>31</sup> Writ large, this victory would have implications that provided fuel for future conflicts and re-shape the Middle East for the next six decades.

### **THE POLITICAL RESHAPING OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT**

The Six Day War took an already complex problem in the Middle East and added an additional layer of complexity that shaped the future of the conflict. For the Arabs, whom been thrice defeated by the Israelis, the political consequences of this stunning defeat served to shape the region in the future. The Arabs viewed the existence of Israel as illegitimate and conveyed this message through rhetoric advocating the destruction of Israel and provocative actions.<sup>32</sup> The war also had important implications for the Soviet Union and the United States, Cold War superpower that desired greater influence in the Middle East.<sup>33</sup> For the Israelis the Six Day War was a catalyst for change both in terms of domestic politics in their regional and international

diplomacy<sup>34</sup>. Israel's victory also placed enormous pressure on the Palestinians, which sparked political change.<sup>35</sup>

### The Israelis

The Six Day War was a decisive military defeat of the Arabs and provided the Israelis a new set of rules from which to deal with the Palestinians and the Arab states.<sup>36</sup> The victory expanded Israel, which also sparked a political debate within Israel on how to best deal with the newly acquired territory and address the residual national security concern.<sup>37</sup> This was part of the lengthy internal debate in Israel on the composition of the lands of Israel. The traditional Zionist concept of *Eretz Israel* did not view the lands occupied after the 1948 war of independence as the entirety of the Jewish homeland. The 1967 War opened the door for those desiring to expand the lands of Israel and create a "greater Israel." At the same time, competing with this desire for expansion (or the inclusion of all of the lands believed to be part of the *Eretz Israel*), was the Arab threat.<sup>38</sup> The Six Day War in one fell swoop addressed both of these issues. The capture of the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, and the Western Bank area, added an additional 42,000 square miles of land between Israel and their Arab opponents.<sup>39</sup> "The occupied territories were the collateral which Israel would agree to trade only in return for a true and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict."<sup>40</sup> Yet, the simplicity of this solution failed to take into account several contributing factors that served to maintain the status quo post-1967. The first is the Arab's unwillingness to agree to such a proposal. The second is the political undercurrent in Israel itself. The Six Day War created the occupied territories, which intensified the political debate in Israel.

This debate primarily centered on the political factions within Israel deciding on how to best deal with the occupied territories. On one side was the left wing dominated by the Labor Party. Led by the Mapai faction, Labor Party interests in the lands acquired during the Six Day War centered on using the newly acquired land as collateral in a viable peace agreement.<sup>41</sup> On the other side was the right wing, dominated primarily by the Herut party.<sup>42</sup> The Herut were opposed the idea of land for peace. Right wing ideology leaned toward traditional Zionism, which believes that the newly acquired territories are part of *Eretz Israel*.<sup>43</sup> Prior to the Six Day War, the right wing was an almost insignificant political factor in Israel and at one point performed so poorly in the Knesset that they controlled a mere eight seats. Nonetheless, like a phoenix, the right wing rose from the ashes and became a prominent political force in determining the disposition of the occupied territories.<sup>44</sup> The crises leading to the Six Day War would be the catalyst to bring the Herut party into the national spotlight, and a series of political maneuvers by the leader Menachem Begin served to strengthen Herut's influence. This resulted in the establishment of the Likud coalition.<sup>45</sup> By 1977, the Likud party assumed dominance in the Knesset.<sup>46</sup> The close alignment of Menachem Begin, leader of the Likud Party with the Revisionist Zionist ideology strikes right at the heart of Israel's dilemma with the occupied territories. Revisionist Zionist has an inflexible and unwavering belief in the destiny of Israelis to *Eretz Israel*; the integrity of the lands leaves no room for compromise with the Arabs.<sup>47</sup> This stands in stark contrast with the Labor party whose willingness to trade land for security as advocated by the highly influential Allon Plan.<sup>48</sup> These competing political views shaped the debate on the occupied territories.

The question of what to do with the occupied territories remains a salient factor in Israeli politics today as it did following the Six Day War. This is particularly the case with the more

than 1.5 million Arab Palestinians living in the occupied territories of the Gaza Strip and West Bank.<sup>49</sup> Initially, the Israelis did not deign to be involved in the affairs of the Palestinians. At the same time, the Palestinian refugee problem was central to the conflict. This placed the Israeli leadership in a dilemma both internally and internationally. If the Israeli leadership were to grant the Palestinians living in the occupied territories citizenship, they risk diluting the Jewish character of the state. On the other hand, the denial of citizenship to the Palestinians in the occupied lands made them a political liability.<sup>50</sup> The occupation resulting from the Six Day War, and Israel's inability to solve the problem will result in one of the longest occupations in the twentieth century.<sup>51</sup> Israel's inability to resolve this issue over the years would become the cause celeb in the Middle East. States opposed to Israel, as well as non-state actors would use this situation to discredit Israel in the eyes of the international community and as an excuse for terrorist actions worldwide against Israel and its allies.

### **The Palestinians**

The outcome of the Six Day War served to shake up the Palestinian reliance on their Arab neighbors and was a powerful catalyst in the awakening of Palestinian Nationalism.<sup>52</sup> Not only did the Arab states fail to liberate the Palestinian people as promised, they lost additional territory to the Israelis.<sup>53</sup> There is the Palestinian view that Zionist not only acted illegally when Israel was established, but exacerbated the situation with the additional occupation and annexation of lands following the Six Day War.<sup>54</sup> This created an opportunity for the militant and ideological Palestinian leadership, whom did not feel obliged to adhere to the timelines and strategic goals of the Arab states, to play a more dominant role in Palestinian

affairs.<sup>55</sup> No longer beholden to the Arab states, Palestinians could now focus on their conflict with Israel with less interference from the Arab states. The Six Day War exposed the weakness of the Arab-Palestinian relationship and changed it in a number of ways. Foremost, the war created tensions between the emergent Palestinian national movement and the Arab countries. It exposed the fundamental rift between the Arabs – who were willing to negotiate with Israel over Palestinian lands for their own peace, but unwilling to stand up to the Israelis to ensure that the Palestinians established their own independent homeland.<sup>56</sup>

This rift created an opening, which transformed the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) into viable national political entity.<sup>57</sup> Created in 1964, the PLO and the militant arm of the PLO, the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA) became more violently opposed to Israeli occupation after the Six Day War.<sup>58</sup> In the immediate aftermath of the war, the numerous Palestinian guerrilla organizations became more active against the Israelis occupying the Gaza Strip and West Bank. The most successful of these organizations was al-Fatah, led by Yasir Arafat.<sup>59</sup> Arafat's rise in prominence from leader of al-Fatah to the leader of the PLO is attributable to the Six Day War. He gained prominence as a Palestinian leader when Israel attempted to conduct strikes on an al-Fatah training camp in Karama, Jordan and suffered heavily losses from Arafat's forces as a result.<sup>60</sup>

The rise of the PLO as both a militant and political organization is attributable to the failure of the Arab States in the 1967 War.<sup>61</sup> One of those lasting impacts was the rise of Arafat to the position of leadership within the PLO – an individual that chartered the course of the PLO, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Palestinians for more than 40 decades.<sup>62</sup> Another was the clashes that occurred between Israel and its Arab neighbors resulting from the activities of guerilla Palestinian organizations bent on political change through violence.<sup>63</sup>



The lack of an effective governing body in the occupied territories provided the PLO an opportunity to assume the characteristics of a Palestinian government. The PLO would assume governmental roles such as the management of schools and hospitals, as well as agencies to provide social services.<sup>64</sup> In the 1980s, Palestinian society continued to evolve as political and governing institutions progressed.<sup>65</sup> Despite the internal political growth, the Palestinians were making little political progress and the restrictions placed on the Palestinians by the Israelis created a great deal of disillusionment with the status quo.<sup>66</sup> This sparked the first spontaneous uprising against Israeli occupation known as the *First Intifada*. Highlighted by riots, mass protests, and civil disobedience there would be a number of long-term affects the *intifada* produced.<sup>67</sup> It made the continued occupation of Gaza and the West Bank less tenable. It also raised the confidence level of the Palestinians – particularly in their ability to act in concert as a political community. Most importantly, the *First Intifada* raised international awareness of the Palestinian cause and made Israeli occupation less popular throughout the world.<sup>68</sup>

### **The Regional Impacts**

The Arab regimes that faced defeat in 1967 came into power during the 1950s, following their first defeat in the 1948 war. The 1967 loss rocked the Arab perception of their ability to deal with the Israelis on military terms.<sup>69</sup> The need to recover from this humiliating defeat galvanized Arab leaders to save face by showing defiance in the face of Israeli demands for peace based upon the new situation. In the early days of the war's conclusion, Israel made it known through the United States that it desired direct talks with the Arab states on the full withdraw from the occupied territories on the basis of a permanent peace.<sup>70</sup> Arab pride and insistence by the hard-liners in Syria and Egypt generated political pressure to push for the

immediate withdrawal of Israel and no negotiation with Israel.<sup>71</sup> The August 1967 resolution drafted by the Arabs at the Khartoum summit summarizes their attitude towards Israel: 1) no peace with Israel, 2) no recognition of Israel, and 3) no negotiations with Israel.<sup>72</sup> The Arabs were shown by the Six Day War that they lack the military means to achieve their political objectives, this left them to resort to an increased diplomatic effort both inter-Arab and internationally.<sup>73</sup> This changed the attitude of the Arab majority, which consisted primarily of the moderates focused on a unified international diplomatic effort and greater political unity among the Arab participants. The moderate solution was predicated on changing the Arab stance by ending the calls for the destruction of Israel (although the hard-liners advocated guerilla warfare as a means to force Israel to relinquish its gains).<sup>74</sup> The leaders of the Arab countries directly involved in the Six Day War, were under immense internal political pressure.

## Egypt

President Nasser rose to prominence following the Egyptian defeat in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. During his career as political leader of Egypt and in many respects de facto leader of Arab Nationalism in the Middle East. He established a secular political ideology based upon Arab unity and nationalism known as Nasserism.<sup>75</sup> The outcome of the Six Day War would be a political disaster for Nasser. Internally, there would be considerable political shakeup in the Egyptian political structure resulting from the Egyptian Armies complete route in the Sinai.<sup>76</sup> Despite this setback, Nasser remained one of the most popular and influential politicians in the Middle East (he attempted to resign after the disaster of the Six Day War, but was called back into office through massive popular support by the Egyptian population).<sup>77</sup> The Six Day War was a turning point for Nasser. The loss of the Suez and the tax on cargo passing through, along

with the loss of the oil producing Sinai weakened Nasser domestically.<sup>78</sup> Nasser, in an attempt to salvage Egyptian pride and to show that Egypt still had a credible fighting force, engaged Israel in a low intensity conflict in the Suez that became the War of Attrition.<sup>79</sup>

The relationships with his Arab allies, in particular Syria and Jordan also changed. On the exterior the Arab allies continued to show solidarity in their cause against the Israelis, but internally the Six Day War exposed the cracks in the relationship.<sup>80</sup> Nasser became more closely aligned with Jordan's King Hussein following the war, his willingness to accept UN Resolution 242 resulted in a split with Syria and other hard-liners on the issue of the occupied territories.<sup>81</sup> Nasser's untimely death in 1970 would effectively end Nasserism<sup>82</sup> and usher in a new era for the Egyptians under Anwar Sadat. Sadat's early attempts at negotiating peace would not meet success, and it would be under Sadat's leadership that Israel would face tactical and operational defeats at the hands of the Arabs in the October 1973 Yom Kippur War.<sup>83</sup> The Yom Kippur War would be the last major conflict between the Egyptians and Israelis. Relations between Egypt and Israel would normalize to a degree to allow for peace talks. The Camp David Accords would be the first ardent attempt to solve the occupied territories. Although the Accords failed to resolve the situation in the occupied territories. Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin would sign a lasting peace agreement in 1978.<sup>84</sup>

## **Jordan**

Jordanian politics post-1967 was schizophrenic in its relationship with the Palestinians. On one hand, Jordan feared the potential affects an independent Palestine might have on its own Palestinian population, while at the same time Jordan's Arabness obligated it to support the Palestinian cause.<sup>85</sup> Thus, King Hussein's political destiny following Jordan's defeat in the Six

Day War related to the Palestinians in two areas; the first is the Palestinian refugee problem, the second is guerilla activities by the PLO that originated from Jordan.<sup>86</sup> Given the level of interaction between the Palestinians and Jordan over the centuries, the presence of Palestinians in Jordan and in the West Bank influenced Jordan's domestic politics and diplomacy. As the last six decades have shown, one of the most enduring issues resulting from the Six Day War has been that of the Palestinian refugee – an issue that has defied local, regional, and international efforts to solve. Following the Six Day War, roughly one-quarter of the Palestinian population living in the West Bank fled across the Jordan River into Jordan.<sup>87</sup> As a supporter of the Palestinian cause, Jordan begrudgingly accepted these refugees and the political and economic cost of sheltering the Palestinians – a people that the Jordanians did not desire incorporate into Jordan. Jordan for all of its rhetoric has never desired the existence of an independent Palestinian state. When Jordan had authority for the West Bank during the British Mandate, Jordan stifled the development of the Palestinian political structure to keep it in check; resulting in a weak and often splintered Palestinian political institution operating under Jordanian authority.<sup>88</sup>

The Six Day War and the emergence of a strong political PLO changed the situation and placed an additional and unwanted burden on Jordan. Many of the guerilla organizations that fled the West Bank turned Jordan into their base of operations. This put Jordan in direct military conflict with Israel, as Israel conducted retaliatory strikes on the guerilla bases in sovereign Jordanian territory.<sup>89</sup> This represented a serious problem for Jordan's domestic authority and threatened to undermine King Hussein's government. King Hussein confronted this issue head on by sending in the Jordanian Army on September 1970 against the Palestinian guerilla organizations based in Jordan. The result of this attempt to restore Jordanian sovereignty is

known as Black September. The Jordanian army killed thousands of Palestinians and the militant Palestinian organizations were mercilessly hunted throughout Jordan until they relocated their base of operations to Syria and Lebanon.<sup>90</sup> King Hussein's actions in dealing with the Palestinian guerilla organizations strained relations between Jordan and many of its Arab partners to include Syria, Libya, Iraq, and Kuwait.<sup>91</sup> Jordan's willingness to act against the PLO (and by extension the Palestinian people), reflects a shift in Jordan's political objectives with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Despite the cost of supporting the Palestinian refugees, Jordanian focus shifted to the internal politics of the state – principally a focus on their domestic political and military agendas. The refugee problem would keep Jordan invested in the Palestinian-Israeli problem, but Jordan worked through its international partners to address Jordanian desires.

## Syria

Syria was more politically militant and ideologically opposed to Zionism and often engaged Israel in low intensity acts of aggression in the period leading to the Six Day War. Unlike the Egyptian-Israeli border, Syria did not have the UN keeping the peace on the border.<sup>92</sup> Syria did not fare much better in its participation in the Six Day War. Syria was the last country to declare a cease-fire in the conflict, its loss of pride, military capability, and the strategic Golan Heights would sharpen the defeat.<sup>93</sup> Syria's defeat would do little to lessen the militant and antagonistic relationship between Syria and Israel. Simultaneous with Syria's external conflict with Israel, it was also dealing with significant internal political strife. As early as 1968, the ruling Baath party in Syria began to splinter because of a difference in ideological approach to Syria's future. The dispute largely centered on General Hafez Assad's desire to promote security

through closer ties with other Arab countries and Saleh Jadid who sought a radical transformation of the country, rejection of Arab regimes that sought compromise with Israel, and the rejection of a Syrian peace agreement with the state of Israel.<sup>94</sup> This internal conflict would eventually find resolution and Assad would assume control of Syria and usher in an era of more moderate internal politics and closer relations with other Arab states.<sup>95</sup> These internal changes in the Syrian politics shaped the Syrian approach to the occupied territories, the Palestinians, and Israel. Assad sought to control Arafat and the PLO by backing rival groups to Fatah and by denying the PLO operations from Syria.<sup>96</sup> Syria under Assad desired to bring Jordan, Lebanon, and the PLO under Syrian leadership in order to have greater voice in the diplomatic process in the Middle East. Control of the PLO was one such way of obtaining more bargaining power. As the PLO's handler, Assad could prevent any settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli problem that failed to further Syria's bid for regional hegemony.<sup>97</sup> Syria sought to capitalize on the results of the Six Day War in order to further its own political agenda. Much like Egypt and Jordan, Syria's focus after the Six Day War became more self-serving. Solutions to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict gained little traction with the Syrians if it did not serve their national objectives.

### **United States and Soviet Union**

The international affect of the Six Day War is evident in its impact on the United States and the Soviet Union. For the United States and Soviet Union, two countries locked in the throes of the Cold War, the Middle East was another theater of operations. For the United States, the need to curb the spreading influence of communism along with an increased recognition of the strategic significance of the Middle East served to drive the American interest in the Middle East.<sup>98</sup> The Soviet Union found itself in a similar position as it tried to spread communism

throughout the Middle East. The Soviet Union recognized the potential to shape events in the Middle East as the countries in that region of the world shifted away from the imperialism. Soviet strategy in the region has been one of support to the Arab states in alignment against Israel and the Western imperialist.<sup>99</sup>

In the period before 1948, the United States did not fully support Israel and its actions in the Middle East. This is primarily because conflict interfered with American economic and political ambitions in the region. The Soviet Union on the other hand saw conflict as a means towards greater influence through arms sales and political upheaval. The positions taken by the United States and Soviet Union before the 1948 war reflect these goals of the superpowers in the region. In the days leading to the 1948 conflict, the United States would impose an arms embargo against the Israelis in Palestine. Conversely, the Soviet Union was the sole country to offer its military and political support Israel during this critical period.<sup>100</sup>

By 1967, the United States formed a closer bond with Israel and sought to benefit economically by establishing peace and the partnerships with Israel and pro-western Arab regimes.<sup>101</sup> The Soviet Union saw benefit from keeping the region in conflict and in the removal of the Middle East monarchies and the denial of democracy.<sup>102</sup> The 1967 Six Day War provided the perfect backdrop for these two great powers as they vied for dominance in the region.

The United States did not support Israel's occupation and annexation of the lands captured in the Six Day War. Instead, the role of the United States in the post-1967 environment was predicated on the peaceful co-existence of Israel with its Arab neighbors within the borders established after 1948. The United States desired peace in the region based on the status quo, thus land for peace became a key aspect in American diplomacy towards resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>103</sup> Conversely, the Soviet Union saw benefit in supporting the Arabs against

Israel, which also served to discredit the impartiality of the United States and the Western powers.<sup>104</sup>

The 1967 war forced American politicians to walk a tight rope in the Middle East. The United States needed to balance American economic and political interests in the region and its support for Israel, while simultaneously appearing impartial when dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict<sup>105</sup>. The Six Day War was a disaster for the Soviet Union and its attempt to spread its influence in the region. A vast majority of the equipment supplied to the Arabs by the Soviet Union was lost or destroyed in the 1967 conflict and this undermined Soviet efforts as a military backer of Arabs in the Middle East.<sup>106</sup> The political upheaval that Egypt and Syria experienced because of the Arab loss in the 1967 war played a role in undermining Soviet influence as a political and military backer for those nations.<sup>107</sup> The events of the 1967 war raised the possibility of a further destabilized Middle East, thus it became necessary for the United States and Soviet Union to establish a suitable framework to begin peace talks in the Middle East.<sup>108</sup> The attempts by the Americans and Soviet Union in finding a solution to the conflict have all fallen short due to an inability to find an agreeable solution to the occupied territories. Early attempts such as UN Resolution 242, the Rogers Plan of 1969 and 1970 all failed to gain traction in forming a lasting peace agreement. Peace between Israel and its neighbors was made because of the work of the United States and Soviet Union to bring the principal participants in the Six Day War to the negotiation table. The long pole in the tent towards lasting peace between Israelis and the Palestinians remains the dispute over the occupied territories and the internal political conflicts that drive the Israelis and Palestinians.

## CONCLUSION



The Six Day War has been the single most important event to shape the Arab-Israeli conflict since the establishment of the state of Israel. This statement has its basis centered on the fact that the single most important change the Six Day War made on the region was in reshaping of Middle East politics through the acquisition of the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights by the Israelis. The founding of the Zionist state of Israel in lands viewed by Muslims, Christians, and Israelis alike as holy land, created significant tension in the region. The Six Day War escalated this conflict and shifted the focus from the existence of the Jewish state to the occupied territories and the Palestinian refugees. The result of this was a political shift by both the Arabs and the Israelis that left little room for compromise. For the Israeli, the Six day War created an internal debate in Israel over the desire to retain the land as part of *Eretz Israel* and the potential security and peace returning the land could create. It also changed the nature of the threat to Israel. Prior to the Six Day War, the threat to Israel was the Arab states. By winning the war, Israel changed the nature of the threat from the armies of the surrounding Arab states to militant Palestinians living in the occupied territories.

For the Palestinians, the Six Day War was an awakening. Prior to the Six Day War, there was a belief by the Palestinians that the Arabs were in full support of an independent Palestinian homeland. The Six Day War showed the Palestinians that the burden of effort would have to be borne on the shoulders of Palestinians. This change gave rise to a more politically astute, aggressive, and active PLO led by Arafat. The PLO and the awakening of the Palestinian cause would give the Arab-Israeli conflict a Palestinian-Israeli context that did not get emphasis prior to 1967.

This also served to shape the politics of the principle Arab states, whose armies engaged Israel in the Six Day War. Egypt, Jordan, and Syria experienced internal political upheaval

resulting from the Six Day War. It was manifested in the not only the internal politics of each state, but also the inter-Arab politics of the region. Lastly, the Six Day War occurred during the Cold War and brought the Middle East center stage in that global conflict. Post 1967, the nature of the relationship of both the United States and the Soviet Union to the Middle East would change. The United States would become more embroiled in the region. The Soviet Union would suffer a serious setback from backing the losers and ultimately undermine its efforts for further influence in the region. The debate over Palestinians and Israel shifted focus from the existence of Israel, and instead the debate has shifted to the disposition of the occupied territories and the plight of the Palestinian people. The conflict has become less about the Arab and the Israelis and more about the Palestinians, Israelis, and the occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank. The solution to this conflict lies in the Palestinians, Gaza, and the West Bank. A situation created by the Six Day War.

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<sup>1</sup> As'ad Ghanem, "Unilateral Withdrawal: A New Phase in Israel's Approach to the Palestinian Question," Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics & Culture, 2006: 1

<sup>2</sup> Michael Matza, "Israelis plan to build wall against terrorism," The Philadelphia Inquirer, 2002: 1

<sup>3</sup> Abdalla M. Battah and Yehuda Lukacs, ed., The Arab-Israeli Conflict Two Decades of Change (Boulder, CO: Westview Books, 1988), 1

<sup>4</sup> Smith, 8

<sup>5</sup> Smith, 41

<sup>6</sup> Underlying modern Zionism was the wish to establish an independent Jewish existence in Palestine, the ancient land of Israel. The key difference between modern and classical Zionism is that Eretz Israel, was a matter Yahweh's punishment of the Israeli for transgressions of the past. Whereas the modern or political Zionism was a secular movement that saw the persecution of the Israeli resulted from societal factors (i.e. the prevalence of anti-Semitism during early and mid 1900s. Smith, 31

<sup>7</sup> Sela, 39-40

<sup>8</sup> William L. Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 2004), 244

<sup>9</sup> Sela, 40

<sup>10</sup> George Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. (Ithaca: NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 396

<sup>11</sup> Tessler, 244-246

<sup>12</sup> Lenczowski, 407

<sup>13</sup> Cleveland, 264

<sup>14</sup> The *Mufti* is a religious official who issues rulings based on Islamic Law. The *Mufti* has a highly respected status and spiritual and social influence, but plays no executive or political role. Although the rulings of the mufti are frequently of political significant, they often conform to the conceptions of the government in power. One of the most influential *Mufti* of Palestine was al-Hajj Amin Al-HUSSEINI who came into power following the death of

Mussa Kazem al-Husseini in 1934. Behind the front of the Arab Executive, al-Hajj Amin would use the Supreme Muslim Council as an instrument of political and factional power over issues that shaped the political life of Palestinian Arabs. Sela, 539, 583

<sup>15</sup> Sela, 49-50

<sup>16</sup> Cleveland, 266

<sup>17</sup> Lenczowski, 407-408

<sup>18</sup> Tessler, 269

<sup>19</sup> Pinhas Lavon replaced Ben Gurion as Defense Minister during the early 1950s. Individuals within the Ministry of Defense (Lavon denied any knowledge of the plan) orchestrated a scheme that attempted to utilize Israeli Agents and locally recruited Egyptian Jews to create anti-Egyptian sentiment in the U.S. by planting bombs and setting fires at various public buildings in Cairo and Alexandria. The goal was to undermine the increasingly cordial relations between Egypt and the United States. The plot was uncovered and the political fall-out from the event would effectively end the attempts at peace talks between Prime Minister Sharett and President Nasser. Tessler, 339-340

<sup>20</sup> Smith, 231-234

<sup>21</sup> Lenczowski, 431

<sup>22</sup> Lenczowski, 432

<sup>23</sup> Lenczowski, 432

<sup>24</sup> Smith, 239-242, 254-255

<sup>25</sup> Lenczowski, 448

<sup>26</sup> Sela, 62-63

<sup>27</sup> Cleveland, 337-338

<sup>28</sup> Smith, 273-275

<sup>29</sup> Sela, 62-63

<sup>30</sup> Smith, 279

<sup>31</sup> Sela, 66

<sup>32</sup> Itamar Rabinovich, "The Politics of the Region," *The Impact of the Six Day War: A Twenty Year Assessment*, ed. Stephen J. Roth (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 43

<sup>33</sup> Robert O. Freeman, "Moscow and the Arab Israeli Conflict Since 1967," *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Two Decades of Change*, ed. Abdalla M. ZBattah and Yehuda Lukacs (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 265-266

<sup>34</sup> Abba Eban, "Israel's Dilemmas: An Opportunity Squandered," *The Impact of the Six Day War: A Twenty Year Assessment*, ed. Stephen J. Roth (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 22-23

<sup>35</sup> Amnon Cohen, "The Shaping of Palestinian Nationalism," *The Impact of the Six Day War: A Twenty Year Assessment*, ed. Stephen J. Roth (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 70

<sup>36</sup> Smith, 293

<sup>37</sup> Ehud Olmert, "Israel's Dilemmas: No Simple Short Cuts," *The Impact of the Six Day War: A Twenty Year Assessment*, ed. Stephen J. Roth (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 30

<sup>38</sup> Sela, 66

<sup>39</sup> Michael B. Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 307

<sup>40</sup> Shlomo Gazit, "Policies in the Administered Territories," *The Impact of the Six Day War: A Twenty Year Assessment*, ed. Stephen J. Roth (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 55

<sup>41</sup> Eran Kaplan, "The National Religious Settlers and Zionist Revisionist Ideology," in Tikkun (San Francisco, CA: Institute of Labor and Mental Health, Sept/Oct 2005), 31, ProQuest, 887232971.

<sup>42</sup> Ilan Peleg, "The Impact of the Six Day War on the Israeli Right: A Second Republic in the Making?" *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Two Decades of Change*, ed. Abdalla M. ZBattah and Yehuda Lukacs (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 55

<sup>43</sup> Olmert, 34

<sup>44</sup> Peleg, 55

<sup>45</sup> Peleg, 58

<sup>46</sup> The Israelis defeated the Egyptian Army in the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Nonetheless, during the early stages of the conflict the Egyptians won significant tactical victories over the Israelis guarding the Sinai. The Israelis came out of the Six Day War with an increased sense of confidence for its Army and a feeling of military superiority for most Israelis worldwide. The Israelis took heavy losses before they could push back the Egyptian forces. This broke the veneer of invulnerability that had surrounded the Israeli Army and the political affects resulted in the shift to the right in Israeli politics. See Olmert, 35

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- <sup>47</sup> Peleg, 62
- <sup>48</sup> Tessler, 468
- <sup>49</sup> Lenczowski, 452
- <sup>50</sup> Cleveland, 363-364
- <sup>51</sup> David Pryce-Jones, "Forty Junes Ago: The Six Day War Marked a Terrible Turn," *National Review* 11 June 2007, 38
- <sup>52</sup> Lenczowski, 453
- <sup>53</sup> Cleveland, 359
- <sup>54</sup> Tessler, 433
- <sup>55</sup> Aaron D. Miller, "The PLO in Retrospect: The Arab-Israeli Dimensions," *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Two Decades of Change*, ed. Abdalla M. ZBattah and Yehuda Lukacs (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 121-122
- <sup>56</sup> Siniora, 95
- <sup>57</sup> Cleveland, 359
- <sup>58</sup> Lenczowski, 453
- <sup>59</sup> Cleveland, 359
- <sup>60</sup> "Fath, al-." *Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East* 4 Vols.(Farmington Hills, MI: Mcmillan Reference USA, 1996)
- <sup>61</sup> Tessler, 423
- <sup>62</sup> Sela, 131-135
- <sup>63</sup> Miller, 122-123
- <sup>64</sup> Cleveland, 361
- <sup>65</sup> Sela, 303
- <sup>66</sup> Tessler, 677
- <sup>67</sup> Sela, 303
- <sup>68</sup> Sela, 307
- <sup>69</sup> Cleveland, 341
- <sup>70</sup> Sela, 66
- <sup>71</sup> Tessler, 408
- <sup>72</sup> Donald E. George, *Israeli Occupation : International Law and Political Realities* (Hicksville, NY: Exposition Press, 1980), 68
- <sup>73</sup> Tessler, 408
- <sup>74</sup> Tessler, 408-409
- <sup>75</sup> Sela, 13-14, 546
- <sup>76</sup> Jeremy Bowen, *Six Days: How the 1967 War Shaped the Middle East* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2005), 318-322
- <sup>77</sup> Baynard and Cantori, 354
- <sup>78</sup> Sela, 14
- <sup>79</sup> Cleveland, 342
- <sup>80</sup> Cleveland, 341-342
- <sup>81</sup> Tessler, 410-411
- <sup>82</sup> An ideological trend that took place in the Fertile Crescent from the mid 1950s to the late 1960s, Nasserism was marked by the radical social and Arab nationalist attitude associated with Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. Nasserism is primarily a western appellation of an ideology seen by the Arabs as "Arab Socialism". As an ideology, Nasserism is a socio-political outlook, marked by substantial protest against the ancient Arab regimes and the Western influence in the Middle East. Early Nasserism was strongly nationalist reformist, emphasizing vigorous economic and social development with an expanding state sector and was predominantly secular in nature. For more information, see Sela, 54
- <sup>83</sup> Lenczowski, 454
- <sup>84</sup> Lenczowski, 467-468
- <sup>85</sup> Smith, 299
- <sup>86</sup> Lenczowski, 492-493
- <sup>87</sup> Tessler, 403
- <sup>88</sup> Emile F. Sahiyeh, "The West Bank Palestinians and the Politics of Marginalization," *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Two Decades of Change*, ed. Abdalla M. ZBattah and Yehuda Lukacs (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 83-85
- <sup>89</sup> Smith, 299-300

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- <sup>90</sup> Cleveland, 362-363
- <sup>91</sup> Curtis R. Ryan, "Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan," *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., ed. David E. Long and Bernard Reich (Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 2002), 263
- <sup>92</sup> Tessler, 359
- <sup>93</sup> Bowen, 294, 303-304
- <sup>94</sup> Lenczowski, 352
- <sup>95</sup> Lenczowski, 354
- <sup>96</sup> Smith, 310
- <sup>97</sup> Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "Egypt, Syria, and the Arab State System," *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Two Decades of Change*, ed. Abdalla M. ZBattah and Yehuda Lukacs (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 187-188
- <sup>98</sup> Steven L. Spiegel, "American Middle East Policy," *The Impact of the Six Day War: A Twenty Year Assessment*, ed. Stephen J. Roth (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 115
- <sup>99</sup> Robert O. Freedman, "Moscow and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Two Decades of Change*, ed. Abdalla M. ZBattah and Yehuda Lukacs (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 265
- <sup>100</sup> Avner Yaniv, "Israeli Foreign Policy Since the Six Day War," *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Two Decades of Change*, ed. Abdalla M. ZBattah and Yehuda Lukacs (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 11, 15
- <sup>101</sup> Spiegel, 115-116
- <sup>102</sup> Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "Soviet Polity and the Six Day War," *The Impact of the Six Day War: A Twenty Year Assessment*, ed. Stephen J. Roth (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 132-133
- <sup>103</sup> Smith, 293
- <sup>104</sup> Freedman, 264-265
- <sup>105</sup> Spiegel, 121
- <sup>106</sup> Freedman, 266
- <sup>107</sup> Freedman, 275-276
- <sup>108</sup> Smith, 297

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